

In her delightful volumes *The Story of My Life*, Queen Marie of Roumania put her country on the map. The first describes the Courts of her grandmother Queen Victoria, her uncle Alexander III, and her gre[^]t-uncle, the childless Ernst, Duke of Coburg, whose heir was her father, the Duke of Edinburgh. The second contains a vivid picture of the Court at Bucharest when King Carol and Carmen Sylva were on the throne. For a woman throbbing with vitality and with ideas of her own it was torture to be kept in a gilded cage, though her respect for the ruler's fine qualities steadily increased. Her husband, Prince Ferdinand, emerges as a kindly mediocrity, paralysed by his inferiority complex and overawed by his formidable uncle. With Roumania's intervention in the Balkan conflict and the accession of Ferdinand in 1914 the author becomes a national figure* The third volume, fortified by copious extracts from the Queen's diaries, gives a dramatic picture of the world war seen through Roumanian spectacles—the long hesitation of Bratiano, the plunge into the whirlpool in 1916, the collapse of the army, the dictated treaty, the re-entry into the struggle when the tide turned, the triumphant return to Bucharest. Throughout these tempestuous years the spirited, talented and beautiful Queen was the soul of the national defence. It was only now, after twenty years of residence, that she took Roumania to her heart: in her own words, she felt herself the mother of an enormous family. When all the leading men in the country had virtually given up hope, she retained her faith in the triumph of the allies. At the end of 1915 Czernin, the Austrian Minister, told her that the fate of Roumania was in her hands, for the King would follow her advice. Now was the time to join the Central Powers : it was the last chance of coming in on the winning side. The Queen

was reduced to
tears, but her will, was unbroken. " You say my
word would be
decisive. I do. not know if this is true, but I do
know that I
cannot act otherwise. I should die of grief if
Roumania were
to go to war against England." England, .she
reminded her
importunate visitor, always won the last battle.

Two out of the many post-war Dictators have
employed
autobiography as an instrument of propaganda.
Mussolini
compiled his record^ at the suggestion of
Richard Washburn
Child, American Ambassador in Rome 1921-
1924, who edited
the manuscript and sung his praises in an
ecstatic Foreword.
"It is all his, and so like him ! I have a deep
affection for
him.. .. Curzon used to refer to him as that
absurd man.